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ELA

***Grade 4
Item Sampler
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DIRECTIONS: Read the passage and then answer the questions that follow.

Excerpt from **The Secret of the Mattang**

by Jason O'Hare

- 1 A long time ago, a Marshallese boy named Kamena lived in a village on an island in the Pacific Ocean. Every night, he went to the palm-tree grove to gather coconuts for his mother. Some of the trees grew horizontally, their trunks jutting out from the coast to reach over the ocean. Before gathering coconuts, Kamena liked to sit on one of these trunks and look for his father's canoe.
- 2 Last season, Father had left with 20 other men to search for new lands. The island was getting crowded, and Father's job was to find new places for people to live.
- 3 But Kamena didn't understand how Father would find his way home.
- 4 "Don't worry, Kamena," his father had said. "Even when I'm far away, the ocean will tell me the way home. The ocean has its own language, and the mattang holds the secret to understanding that language."
- 5 The mattang was made of sticks tied with coconut fibers. Some of the sticks crossed one way; some crossed another way. A few sticks curved from top to bottom. Father had tied five small shells onto it, making it look even more confusing. Then Father had handed the mattang to Kamena.
- 6 "But you need it," Kamena said.
- 7 "I know its secrets already," said Father. "You keep it safe and remember that I always have a way of finding home."
- 8 Father had left the next morning, and Kamena became as determined as the wind to learn the mattang's secrets.
- 9 But tonight he was no closer to discovering those secrets than he was then.
- 10 It was just after sunset, and the first stars shone. Time to get to work. When Kamena stood up, the palm tree bounced, and something fell off the end with a splash.
- 11 What luck! Nearly a dozen ripe coconuts bobbed in the ocean. Kamena could bring them home to Mother.

- 12 He scurried along the trunk back to the water's edge. Waiting for the waves to wash the coconuts to shore would be easier than hanging from the tree to pick them up.
- 13 But a curious thing happened. The coconuts floated away. In fact, the longer Kamena waited, the farther the coconuts floated.
- 14 He needed those!
- 15 He was about to swim after them when he realized he might end up floating out into the ocean along with the coconuts. But how could that be if he saw wave after wave washing onto the beach?
- 16 It reminded Kamena of something Father had shown him. They'd been fishing together near the coral reef. It was always calm there, and the reef was so big that it popped out of the water like a whale.
- 17 After baiting his shell hook with a fat piece of fish, Kamena had plopped it into the water, sending ripples across the calm lagoon.
- 18 "Watch the ripples," said Father.
- 19 The ripples had traveled across the water like a set of waves on a tiny ocean. When they had hit the coral, they bounced off and traveled back to where Kamena had thrown the bait.
- 20 Now Kamena looked at the coconuts. He guessed what was happening. A wave had bounced off the island, the way ripples had bounced off the coral.
- 21 He picked up the mattang. It made sense now! The five shells were islands. The sticks of crisscrossing wood showed the pattern of waves bouncing between the islands. If Father could tell the direction the waves came from, he could tell where the islands were!
- 22 That was the secret! He had to tell Mother. He forgot about the coconuts and raced back to the village.
- 23 But everyone in the village was gathered around a blazing fire. What was going on? One of the men standing next to the fire turned to face him.
- 24 Kamena's heart leaped. It was Father!
- 25 Kamena nearly knocked him over when he ran to him.
- 26 Father laughed. "We returned," he said, "just as I told you we would." Then Father noticed the mattang.

- 27 "I know the secret," Kamena said. "I know the mattang shows the waves, just like the ripples in the lagoon."
- 28 Father smiled. "I knew you could figure out its secret. And do you know what that means? It means you're ready to come on our next voyage."
- 29 That night, the villagers shared songs and stories as they ate fish cooked over an open fire. But nobody was happier than Kamena. Soon he would see the places Father talked about. And, just like Father, he would always be able to find his way home.



Jason O'Hare, "Secret of the Mattang," *Highlights for Children, Inc.* 67, no. 5 (2012).

1. The following question has two parts. First, answer Part A. Then, answer Part B.

Part A

What does jutting mean in paragraph 1?

- Ⓐ sticking straight out
- Ⓑ bouncing up and down
- Ⓒ moving in all directions
- Ⓓ growing upward to the sky

Part B

Which detail from paragraph 1 **best** supports the answer to Part A?

- Ⓐ "a village on an island"
- Ⓑ "to gather coconuts for his mother"
- Ⓒ "to reach over the ocean"
- Ⓓ "liked to sit on one of these trunks"

- 2.** What do the coconuts teach Kamena about the islands and the ocean?
- Ⓐ Coconuts are round, which allow them to float around the islands.
 - Ⓑ When they float away, they show him the direction of the waves.
 - Ⓒ When they fall from the tree, they frighten him and make him worry.
 - Ⓓ Coconuts are food from the island, and will help feed the family while father is away.
- 3.** What two things happened as Kamena watched the coconuts float away?
- Ⓐ Kamena and his father discovered a new coral reef.
 - Ⓑ Kamena's father caught a fish using a coconut as bait.
 - Ⓒ Kamena remembered something that happened in the past.
 - Ⓓ Kamena and his father got caught in a storm while fishing.
 - Ⓔ Kamena realized something about the language of the ocean.
 - Ⓕ Kamena's father invited him to come on the next voyage.

4. The following question has two parts. First, answer Part A. Then, answer Part B.

Part A

Which two words **best** describe Kamena’s father in this story?

- Ⓐ loving and wise
- Ⓑ loud and powerful
- Ⓒ fearful and hidden
- Ⓓ funny and entertaining

Part B

Which detail from the story **best** supports the answer in Part A?

- Ⓐ “Last season, Father had left with 20 other men to search for new lands.” (paragraph 2)
- Ⓑ ““Don’t worry, Kamena,’ his father said. ‘Even when I’m far away, the ocean will tell me the way home.’” (paragraph 4)
- Ⓒ “Kamena’s heart leaped. It was Father! Kamena nearly knocked him over when he ran to him.” (paragraphs 24 and 25)
- Ⓓ “And, just like Father, he would always be able to find his way home.” (paragraph 29)

- 5.** Based on the description in the story, what is a mattang?
- Ⓐ a long boat used to travel between Pacific islands
 - Ⓑ an honorable person who serves a community well
 - Ⓒ a kind of map made with sticks, fibers, and shells
 - Ⓓ a fish that lives among coral reefs in the Pacific Ocean

6. Choose a word or phrase for each blank to complete these sentences about a theme of the story.

This story shows that

<input type="radio"/> oceans
<input type="radio"/> animals
<input type="radio"/> mountains

 hold wisdom that can

<input type="radio"/> frighten
<input type="radio"/> guide
<input type="radio"/> cure

 people.

This wisdom can be

<input type="radio"/> passed down
<input type="radio"/> skipped over
<input type="radio"/> talked to

 from adults to

<input type="radio"/> grandparents
<input type="radio"/> friends
<input type="radio"/> children

.

7. The following question has two parts. First, answer Part A. Then, answer Part B.

Part A

What secret does the mattang help Kamena understand?

- Ⓐ Coconuts and fish are the most important foods in the Pacific.
- Ⓑ A person can make beautiful art with sticks and shells.
- Ⓒ The island will always provide coconuts for the people.
- Ⓓ Waves bounce in patterns off the five islands.

Part B

Which detail from the story **best** supports the answer to Part A?

- Ⓐ "What luck! Nearly a dozen ripe coconuts bobbed in the ocean." (paragraph 11)
- Ⓑ "If Father could tell the direction the waves came from, he could tell where the islands were!" (paragraph 21)
- Ⓒ "That was the secret! He had to tell Mother." (paragraph 22)
- Ⓓ "That night, the villagers shared songs and stories as they ate fish cooked over an open fire." (paragraph 29)

8. Read these sentences from paragraph 13.

But a curious thing happened. The coconuts floated away.

Which word would **best** replace curious as it is used in the paragraph?

Ⓐ difficult

Ⓑ perfect

Ⓒ playful

Ⓓ strange

9. Select the sentence from paragraphs 2–4 that indicates Kamena is concerned about his father when he is away.

Ⓐ "Last season, Father had left with 20 other men to search for new lands."

Ⓑ "But Kamena didn't understand how Father would find his way home."

Ⓒ "'Don't worry, Kamena,' his father had said."

Ⓓ "'Even when I'm far away, the ocean will tell me the way home.'"

10. Choose a word or phrase for each blank that completes the sentence, showing how the setting changes throughout the story.

The setting of "The Secret of the Mattang" is

a Pacific island

an African desert

a Mexican river

but it changes from

a boat on the ocean

a rocky mountaintop

trees by the ocean

at the beginning of

the story to

a fishing spot

the family's house

the village center

at the end.

11. Select two things Kamena achieves in this story.

- Ⓐ He learns to hunt by watching his father.
- Ⓑ He learns to cook by watching his mother.
- Ⓒ He makes a friend at the village meeting.
- Ⓓ He figures out a secret by watching the waves.
- Ⓔ He gets over his fear of swimming in the ocean.
- Ⓕ He shows his father that he can solve a mystery.

12. Choose the **best** summary of “The Secret of the Mattang.”

- Ⓐ A father gives a gift to his son. The boy learns that the ocean waves can show the way home. When his father returns, he is proud that his son solved the mystery.
- Ⓑ A boy named Kamena lives on an island in the Pacific. He likes to sit near the ocean and watch the waves. One day, his father gives him a strange gift.
- Ⓒ The story shows a boy growing up. The boy is left behind in the beginning of the story, but in the end he finds out he will go on the next trip.
- Ⓓ Kamena watches the waves bouncing off the coconuts and suddenly understands what the mattang means. He looks forward to his father’s return so he can share the secret with him.

DIRECTIONS: Read the passage and then answer the questions that follow.

Foxes in the City

by Laurie Kessler

1 The temperature is 103 degrees Fahrenheit, and the time is not even noon yet. The tracker shades her eyes from the bright sun and scans the golf course. Finally, she finds what she is looking for: a hole in the ground.

2 This hole does not have a golf ball in it. Instead, it cradles the smallest fox in North America, the San Joaquin (wa-keen) kit fox. Curled up in a chamber several feet underground, the mother and her pups hide from the heat. In the cool of the evening, they will crawl from their den and look for food.

City Fox, Country Fox

3 Tracking radio-collared kit foxes is what researcher Christine Van Horn Job does. But she's not following just any kind of kit fox. She keeps a sharp eye on a special group called urban kit foxes. They are called urban because they live in the city and not in their usual grassland or scrubland habitat.

4 Foxes in the city? That's right. San Joaquin kit foxes are endangered. But urban kit foxes are doing better than their country kin. City foxes weigh more and live longer, and more urban females are having pups.

5 To find out why city foxes are doing better, Dr. Brian Cypher has been studying these tiny cousins of the dog for more than 10 years.

6 Dr. Cypher, Ms. Van Horn Job, and a small team of researchers have been following the cat-sized foxes all over Bakersfield, California. They have tracked the foxes on playgrounds, school campuses, and golf courses. They have spotted foxes in drainage basins, called sumps, next to houses. They found more kit foxes at the edges of parking lots next to a huge shopping mall.

7 "One of the reasons they're doing so well is because they dig through trash cans for food," says Dr. Cypher. "They're scavengers."

8 In other words, in addition to eating squirrels and mice, the foxes also eat people's leftovers. "We've found all kinds of junk-food wrappers around their dens," adds Ms. Van Horn Job.

9 Kit foxes will eat hamburgers, burritos, hot dogs—just about anything they can carry home. But don't worry. They don't harm people. In fact, they do everything they can to steer clear of humans.

Small but Mighty

10 The San Joaquin kit fox has a physical trait that may also play a role in its urban survival: it's little. Most house cats weigh 10 to 15 pounds. By contrast, average kit foxes weigh about five pounds. Because they are small, they can squeeze into tight places.

11 Coyotes, red foxes, and bobcats live at the edges of town. Because of their large sizes, they would have a hard time making a permanent home within the city. That's a good thing for the kit fox. In the kit fox's native grasslands and scrublands, those bigger animals eat kit foxes.

12 So, are San Joaquin kit foxes safer on golf courses, in vacant lots, near houses, and on school grounds? "There are definitely dangers in urban areas," Dr. Cypher says. "But in general, urban kit foxes live longer than their country kin."

Outfoxing the Dangers

13 Luckily, Dr. Cypher has found people in Bakersfield who are willing to help keep the 300 or so urban kit foxes safe. For example, the Seven Oaks Country Club agreed to put artificial dens underneath its golf course. These dens are made of plastic pipes. Some of them even come with underground chambers.

14 The foxes seem to like their new homes. "This is actually a pretty cool place for a fox to live," says Ms. Van Horn Job. The grass is cooler than the dirt, and the foxes can find squirrels and insects to eat. If that doesn't work, there's always a trash can to pick through. The area is also quiet at night, since nobody plays golf after a set time.

15 Because the country club is building new homes for people, more walls are going up. The club is placing plastic pipes in the bottom sections of these walls so that kit foxes will not become trapped in small areas. The pipes are just big enough to allow a kit fox to slip through.

16 Dr. Cypher hopes that more companies and citizens will also help the kit fox. If they do, they will help this endangered animal outfox its threats and survive.



Laurie Kessler, "Foxes in the City," *Highlights for Children, Inc.* 63, no.1 (January 2013).

- 13.** Select the sentence or phrase from paragraphs 4–5 that shows city foxes “do better” than their cousins in the country.
- Ⓐ “San Joaquin kit foxes are endangered.”
 - Ⓑ “But urban kit foxes are doing better than their country kin.”
 - Ⓒ “City foxes weigh more and live longer.”
 - Ⓓ “Dr. Brian Cypher has been studying these tiny cousins of the dog for more than 10 years.”

- 14.** Select two reasons kit foxes survive in cities.

<input type="radio"/> They live at the edge of town.
<input type="radio"/> They make good pets for people.
<input type="radio"/> They like to play on playgrounds.
<input type="radio"/> There are safe places for them to live.
<input type="radio"/> There is plenty of food for them to eat.

15. Which sentence **best** states the main idea of the passage?
- Ⓐ Kit foxes eat squirrels, mice, and people’s leftover food.
 - Ⓑ Scientists study kit foxes by tracking them in grasslands.
 - Ⓒ San Joaquin offers plenty of open space for kit foxes to roam.
 - Ⓓ Kit foxes do well in cities if they have food and places to live.

16. Select the words that correctly complete this sentence.

Golf courses make good homes for kit foxes because grass is

<input type="radio"/> longer
<input type="radio"/> cooler
<input type="radio"/> greener

than dirt, because it is

<input type="radio"/> dark
<input type="radio"/> quiet
<input type="radio"/> busy

at night, and

because they can find

<input type="radio"/> squirrels and insects
<input type="radio"/> cats and coyotes
<input type="radio"/> trees and flowers

to eat.

17. Using information from the passage, for each kind of animal in Column A, choose one of the descriptions in Column B.

Column A	Column B			
Kit foxes	<input type="radio"/> like to eat kit foxes	<input type="radio"/> are food for kit foxes	<input type="radio"/> can weigh up to 15 pounds	<input type="radio"/> are related to dogs
Bobcats	<input type="radio"/> like to eat kit foxes	<input type="radio"/> are food for kit foxes	<input type="radio"/> can weigh up to 15 pounds	<input type="radio"/> are related to dogs
Squirrels	<input type="radio"/> like to eat kit foxes	<input type="radio"/> are food for kit foxes	<input type="radio"/> can weigh up to 15 pounds	<input type="radio"/> are related to dogs
House cats	<input type="radio"/> like to eat kit foxes	<input type="radio"/> are food for kit foxes	<input type="radio"/> can weigh up to 15 pounds	<input type="radio"/> are related to dogs

18. Read this sentence from the last paragraph of the passage.

If they do, they will help this endangered animal outfox its threats and survive.

Which word from the passage is the **best** synonym for threats?

- Ⓐ areas
- Ⓑ citizens
- Ⓒ dangers
- Ⓓ chambers

19. How do the first two paragraphs introduce the rest of the passage?

- Ⓐ They describe why the foxes leave their country homes.
- Ⓑ They compare foxes to other animals that live in the city.
- Ⓒ They explain the problems facing foxes and their solutions.
- Ⓓ They help readers picture Ms. Van Horn Job looking for a fox.

20. Based on information from the passage, for each effect in Column A, choose its cause in Column B.

Column A	Column B			
Builders put plastic pipes in new walls.	<input type="radio"/> They need to track the foxes to help them.	<input type="radio"/> Foxes prefer to hunt when it is cool at night.	<input type="radio"/> Foxes can get trapped in small areas.	<input type="radio"/> They want to protect kit foxes.
Foxes like to live on golf courses.	<input type="radio"/> They need to track the foxes to help them.	<input type="radio"/> Foxes prefer to hunt when it is cool at night.	<input type="radio"/> Foxes can get trapped in small areas.	<input type="radio"/> They want to protect kit foxes.
Golf course owners build underground dens.	<input type="radio"/> They need to track the foxes to help them.	<input type="radio"/> Foxes prefer to hunt when it is cool at night.	<input type="radio"/> Foxes can get trapped in small areas.	<input type="radio"/> They want to protect kit foxes.
Researchers put collars on foxes.	<input type="radio"/> They need to track the foxes to help them.	<input type="radio"/> Foxes prefer to hunt when it is cool at night.	<input type="radio"/> Foxes can get trapped in small areas.	<input type="radio"/> They want to protect kit foxes.

21. Select the sentence from paragraphs 1–2 that shows when kit foxes are most active.

- Ⓐ "The temperature is 103 degrees Fahrenheit, and the time is not even noon yet."
- Ⓑ "Finally, she finds what she is looking for: a hole in the ground."
- Ⓒ "Curled up in a chamber several feet underground, the mother and her pups hide from the heat."
- Ⓓ "In the cool of the evening, they will crawl from their den and look for food."

22. Choose a word or phrase for each blank to complete the sentence.

The Seven Oaks Country Club built

<input type="radio"/> fox dens
<input type="radio"/> golf clubs
<input type="radio"/> trash cans

 made of plastic

pipes and

<input type="radio"/> beautiful
<input type="radio"/> enormous
<input type="radio"/> underground

 chambers. They also built new homes

for

<input type="radio"/> bobcats
<input type="radio"/> people
<input type="radio"/> squirrels

 that included plastic pipes under the walls for the
foxes.

23. Read these sentences from paragraph 2.

This hole does not have a golf ball in it. Instead, it cradles the smallest fox in North America, the San Joaquin (wa-keen) kit fox.

Select the meaning the author suggests by using the word cradles to describe the hole.

- Ⓐ The fox is a large animal.
- Ⓑ The only food is leftovers.
- Ⓒ The hole is deep underground.
- Ⓓ The hole is holding something gently.

24. The following question has two parts. First, answer Part A. Then, answer Part B.

Part A

Read this sentence from paragraph 1.

The tracker shades her eyes from the bright sun and scans the golf course.

Which word has nearly the same meaning as scans?

- Ⓐ searches
- Ⓑ darkens
- Ⓒ travels
- Ⓓ mows

Part B

Which phrase from paragraph 1 **best** helps you understand the meaning of scans in Part A?

- Ⓐ "temperature is 103 degrees"
- Ⓑ "time is not even noon yet"
- Ⓒ "finds what she is looking for"
- Ⓓ "a hole in the ground"

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